

CPYRGHT

Washington Scene . . . By George Dixon

Cut Rates at Society Balls

AT ONE TABLE in the Turf Club at Laurel race track the other day were three beautiful young matrons who rotate as "chairmen" of our most elegant society balls.

In between handicapping losers, the Mesdames Kay Topping, Ceci Carusi and Jane Wheeler lamented over the handicaps they are forced to endure as chairmanic depressives.

They moaned and groaned. Leavesdropped conscientiously, but it was difficult at times to distinguish whether they were wailing over actual horses or the horsing-around they have to take in organizing less equine social functions.

Ear-peeping so assiduously that I almost blew a chance to blow two races, I learned from their lamentations that one of their besetting problems is how many concessions to offer in luring VIPs to their glittering jamborees.



Dixon

Mrs. Carusi, who is chairman this year of the International Ball, which will be held Nov. 7, declared flatly—as she tore up three daily double tickets—that there will be positively no cut rates for her affair because the proceeds are to go to the Children's Convalescent Hospital. Even if President Eisenhower and Vice President Nixon wish to go they will have to scratch up \$30 each.

MRS. TOPPING lamented that so novel and uncompromising a stand could not be taken for the Corcoran Art Gallery ball this Friday, April 18. She said it had been necessary to offer bargain prices to window dress the affair with luminaries.

A horse began acting up at the starting gate. Mrs. Wheeler emitted a stricken cry. After the race, the young matrons reverted moodily to a discussion of the Opera Society ball, which will be held on June 6.

I learned that one of the highly cherished beauties had received a phone call the evening before from Mrs. H. Gates (Lollie) Lloyd, member of an old Philadelphia family, whose husband is currently being intelligent at the Central Intelligence Agency. Mrs. Lloyd said that ticket prices for the Opera Society ball had been pitched at \$15, but that special inducements were in order.

Mrs. Lloyd was asked: "What inducements?"

"Well," she said, "if you bring any Italian the price will be only \$10."

"Why 'any Italian'?" she was asked.

"Because," she replied with irrefutable logic, "the ball will be held in the Italian Embassy."

Then she added the super-inducement which—I have since ascertained—is common practice in our VIP-minded community:

"If you bring an ambassador—any ambassador—the price will be only \$5."

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